



Take the Human Rights Act Challenge!



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We hope you will feel inspired to take action on all of our campaigns but remind you that all actions are optional.

This mailing is also available to download at

www.amnesty.org.uk/youth

YOUTH GROUP ACTION

IN A NUTSHELL

The Human Rights Act (HRA) protects the basic rights we all have as human beings and allows us to challenge authorities if they violate them. The government wants to scrap the act and replace it with a British Bill of Rights. As well as asking you to sign a petition to Save the Human Rights Act, we are challenging youth, student and local Amnesty groups to come up with the most creative way to represent the Human Rights Act. There will be prizes for the best ones!

THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT CAMPAIGN

The government announced in May that they would be consulting on the proposals to scrap the HRA and replace it with a British Bill of Rights. We are waiting to hear exact timings so these are subject to change but at present we see this campaign as having four stages:

Phase 1: From now until the consultation starts

From now until the consultation is announced we are hoping to help groups to spread the word about the HRA. We hope you and your group will be signing the petition to the Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove (See **Take Action 2** on page 3). We want to build support for the HRA among our Amnesty groups and the wider public.

Phase 2: Consultation responses

The government decided they are going to consult on the proposed scrapping of the Human Rights Act (HRA) and we are currently waiting to hear more on this. The government has said they will release a consultation in the autumn (we have heard it is coming in October/November but this could change).

We will let you know as soon as the consultation is announced and then we will send over some tips for how you/your group can respond (we assume this will be a public consultation). It is important that we get as many different responses as possible so hopefully you will all be able to spend a little time working on this.

Phase 3: From February until the bill is announced

We want to use this phase to really put **pressure on our MPs**. We need to ensure the supportive MPs turn up and vote to save the HRA and that MPs who currently don't support the HRA know that their constituents care passionately about this issue. We will be sending out more information to groups in February.

Phase 4: Campaigning on a bill

This will be a targeted campaign to save the HRA while a bill goes through parliament. We don't know when this will be but will be ready to respond when it comes.

Overall it is key that throughout this whole process we continue to build support among the public so please do think about how you and your group can engage people on this issue!

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TAKE ACTION 1:

TAKE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT CHALLENGE!

It's time to get creative for the Human Rights Act! We are challenging youth, student and local Amnesty groups to come up with the most creative way to visually represent the Human Rights Act. **Prizes will be given to the best ones.**

You can create any type of content you like but here are a few ideas to get you thinking:

- Hold a HRA-themed **AmnesTea** bake sale. Ask people to bake cakes based on an article in the HRA (see **Extras** section for a short version of the HRA).
- Draw a picture or take photos representing a right in the HRA.
- Create a HRA banner and display it somewhere prominent in your school/college/local community.
- Hold a HRA flashmob in your town/city/on your campus/in your playground.
- Write a short story/poem/song and recite/perform it.

Or think of something completely unique!

We will judge the winners on these criteria:

- Most creative
- Reached out to the most people/engaged new audiences
- Best representation of a HRA right/the act itself!

Winning entries will be used to help promote the campaign.

To enter you need to send us a photo or video of your action or the action itself if it's a photo or picture. Send your entries to youthgroups@amnesty.org.uk

Deadline: 31st January 2016.

TAKE ACTION 2: SIGN THE PETITION TO MICHAEL GOVE

We are urging the Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove, to **Save the Human Rights Act**. Sign our petition and get others to as well (see **Extras** section for a template). You can also find an action card version of the petition at the back of our HRA mini-guide (see Resources section) and on the website: <http://keeptheact.uk>.

Please send completed petitions to: Anne Montague, Amnesty International UK, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

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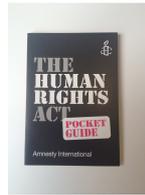
RESOURCES

We have created resources to help you spread the word:

Mini guide - This sets out the HRA, highlights some real life cases and has an action to Michael Gove at the back. Good for stalls and events.



Pocket guide - a condensed version of the mini guide that can be used with people who are less engaged and who might not yet sign a petition.



HRA posters - for stalls and events.



Save the Human Rights Act badges

(Heart) Human Rights badges



Save the Human Rights Act stickers



You can order these resources by calling 01788 545 553 and giving the following codes:

- HRA001 - HRA Mini guide
- HRA002 - HRA pocket guide
- HRA003 - HRA poster
- HRA004 - (Heart) Human Rights badges
- HRA005 – Save the Human Rights Act badges
- HRA006 – Save the Human Rights Act stickers

EXTRAS 1: FAQs

1. What is the Human Rights Act?

The Human Rights Act is a UK law which protects our human rights. It incorporates most of the rights in European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – an international treaty created following World War II, inspired partly by the desire to stop such atrocities happening again. In fact, British legal experts drafted most of it and the UK was the first country to sign up.

The Human Rights Act, which came into force in 2000, brings human rights home to the UK. It allows people to turn to UK courts and UK judges if they feel their rights are not being respected by the government or public authorities instead of having to go all the way to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

2. How does the Human Rights Act work?

The Human Rights Act affects the way laws are made and applied. It requires the UK government to explain whether proposed new laws are compatible, or not, with our human rights, and existing laws to be interpreted to respect human rights as far as possible.

It also means human rights must be taken into account by all public authorities – government, councils, courts, schools, anyone responsible for carrying out a ‘public function’ – when they’re making decisions and developing policies that affect our lives. If they get that wrong, you can challenge their decision in a UK court.

In most individual cases, the authority comes to an agreement with the person about how to protect their rights, without going to court. Sometimes this leads to improved policies which benefit entire communities or the country as a whole.

3. Why do we want to keep the Human Rights Act?

Human rights are for everyone and the Human Rights Act protects those rights from abuse by the state in the UK. If you’re lucky, you might never be aware of the protection it gives you – that means it’s doing its job and your rights haven’t been abused. But other people aren’t so lucky and they have relied on the Human Rights Act for everything from keeping their families together, to protecting the right to peaceful protest.

4. Who is the Human Rights Act for?

Everyone. Large numbers of ordinary people in the UK depend on it every year to make sure their rights are protected against the state.

Not only does the Human Rights Act affect individual cases, those can also lead to a wider change in approach or positive policy changes which can affect thousands of people. For example, it has been used to:

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- ensure dignity for disabled people and others receiving care at home
- provide support for a young girl with learning disabilities to get to and from school
- demand investigations into particularly severe violent crimes like rape are held by police in a timely, efficient manner
- make sure a woman fleeing domestic violence wasn't separated from her children

5. Why am I told that Europe is telling us what to do?

The view that the Human Rights Act gives Europe the power to tell us what to do is simply not true. The Human Rights Act allows people to seek justice in UK courts. If the Human Rights Act was scrapped, you would still be protected by the European Convention on Human Rights, but like before the Act was passed, you would have to apply to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to challenge a decision which is very time-consuming and expensive. Far from bringing power back to the UK, repealing the Act would mean cases would be heard in Strasbourg, instead of in UK courts.

The ECtHR rulings are nothing to do with the EU – it is a regional treaty overseen by a regional court made up of independent judges from all member states, including the UK.

6. Why do we campaign on this when we don't know what's in the proposed British bill of rights?

Keeping the Human Rights Act is very important so we want to make sure we are campaigning on it now. We have not yet seen the proposed bill of rights but we are very concerned about what it might contain based on what has been said and proposed already. In October 2014 the Conservative Party set out their ideas for a bill of rights and they were very concerning. They limited who got rights, when they could claim them and where they applied. Human Rights are everyone's by virtue of being human. The precedent of a government deciding who gets rights is very concerning. We are working now to make sure our opposition to this proposal is clear and we will respond in detail when the bill of rights is finally released.

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EXTRAS 2: THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT (short version)

- Article 2 Everyone has the right to life.
- Article 3 Everyone has the absolute right not to be tortured or treated in a way which is cruel or humiliating.
- Article 4 Everyone has the right not to be required to do forced or compulsory labour and the absolute right not to be treated as a slave.
- Article 5 Everyone has the right to liberty and security.
- Article 6 Everyone has the right to a fair trial.
- Article 7 Everyone has the right not to be punished for doing something if your action was not against the law when you did it
- Article 8 Everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, their home and their letters, emails and phone calls.
- Article 9 Everyone has the right to believe what they want, and to hold their own opinions. This includes the right to hold religious beliefs.
- Article 10 Everyone has the right to express their views and opinions. You have a right to receive information and have your say – as long as you respect other people.
- Article 11 Everyone has the right to get together with other people in a peaceful way and everyone has the right to join a trade union.
- Article 12 Everyone has the right to marry and have a family. The national law sets the minimum age this can take place at.
- Article 14 You have the right not to be treated unfairly in the enjoyment of your rights because of your age, race, religion, sex, disability or any other status.
- The First Protocol: Article 1 Everyone has the right to enjoy their possessions.
- The First Protocol: Article 2 Everyone has the right to an education.
- The First Protocol: Article 3 Everyone has the right to vote in elections to choose which government they want to run the country. The law states the minimum age someone can vote.
- The Thirteenth Protocol: Article 1 Nobody can be sentenced to death for any crime

YOUTH GROUP ACTION



SAVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Dear Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor
Don't let the government turn universal freedoms into privileges for a chosen few. Save the Human Rights Act.

Name	School Address	School Postcode	Signature

By giving us your details you are requesting updates about Amnesty's work and the work of Amnesty Groups in your area. If at any time you would prefer not to receive updates from Amnesty, please tell us at sct@amnesty.org.uk